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## Likely Story

*The spy who changed his plea*

In the murky world of international espionage, the explanation offered in London's Old Bailey courtroom sounded plausible enough. Accused of passing North Atlantic Treaty Organization secrets to the Soviet Union from 1956 to 1961, Hugh Hambleton, 60, a Canadian university professor, asserted that he was actually operating as a double agent. The NATO papers he took had been doctored to mislead the Soviets, he said. Hambleton insisted that he was acting on the instructions of two control officers, a Frenchman and a Canadian, in an effort to infiltrate the KGB.

Hambleton did not stick to that story for long. Informed that the prosecution would produce French and Canadian intelligence officials to deny that he had been a double agent, Hambleton abruptly changed his plea last week to guilty. Sir David Croom-Johnson, the judge presiding over the seven-day trial, then addressed Hambleton: "It was a long time ago that you committed these acts. But they catch up with you in the end, and the decision of this court is that you go to prison for ten years." Hambleton thus became the fifth person this year to be convicted of violating Britain's Official Secrets Act. ■